



Loomis Sayles' Undergraduate Women's Investment Network and Bentley University

By Brian Moccio – February 5, 2021

Loomis Sayles has partnered with Bentley University in the Undergraduate Women's Investment Network (UWIN) program. The program aims to inspire, develop and recruit undergraduate women for investment management careers through mentorship and internship opportunities. Bentley women have participated in this program since its inception in 2015.

Bentley alum, Deanna Leung '19, participated in this program and wrote about her experience and how it has positively impacted her professional career and navigating the world of finance:

"When I was a sophomore at Bentley University, friends and family would ask me what I wanted to do in finance. I would answer, "I don't know." That "I don't know" was two-fold – I didn't know what I wanted to do and I didn't know what was out there. Finance is such a broad field and I had only heard of investment banking, corporate finance, and financial planning. One day while walking past Bentley's trading room, I saw a flyer with an orange and purple logo. It was the logo for the Loomis Sayles Undergraduate Women's Investment Network (UWIN), a program that offers mentorship and internship opportunities for undergraduate women in investment management. It was founded by Shannon O'Mara, the Associate Director of Credit Research at Loomis Sayles, when she discovered that only 18% of applicants for junior research positions at Loomis Sayles in 2014 and 2015 were women. I had never heard of Loomis Sayles and didn't know what investment management was but it piqued my interest. I applied and was accepted as a mentee.

I was invited to Loomis Sayles in Boston to welcome the new cohort of interns and mentees. When I arrived, I was led into a conference room that had several tables, each of which had binders with our names on them. It was hard to believe that I was at the headquarters of a global investment firm that managed assets for clients all over the world. As I anxiously waited for the day to kick off, I looked over the agenda; I saw things like, "Setting Yourself Up for Success," "Maximizing Your Mentorship Opportunity," "Investment Management 101," "Resumes, Cover Letters, and Interviewing," and "Meet and Greet with Your Mentor." The nerves faded as I saw that I didn't need to worry that I didn't know anything, because UWIN had put so much attention to so many topics. I couldn't believe that we would cover so much in just one day. Later, I would discover that the learning would only build and accelerate during my time as a mentee.

After the first day, I was paired with my mentor who was a VP in Institutional Sales. Sometimes I would visit the office and other times I would have phone calls or read over materials he would send me about investment management. Working with my mentor in combination with my classes at Bentley facilitated my learning in a unique way that most students don't get to experience. I would get to discuss what I learned in class with a seasoned professional who could speak to the real-world applications. Moreover, questions that I didn't ask in class because I was too shy, I comfortably asked my mentor. He acknowledged this and encouraged me to participate more. This supportive relationship cultivated through the UWIN program

pushed me to recognize my strengths and weaknesses so that by the end of the semester, when the UWIN cohort regrouped at Loomis Sayles, I was able to reflect back on my professional development.

More than just a program, though, I would call UWIN a community. We support each other, dispense our resources, and share in the joy of each other's successes. Working together, the UWIN team, mentors, and alumni foster an environment where participants can discover a passion for investment management and financial markets through a hands-on experience. Furthermore, participants learn about the values of being curious, networking, leveraging mentors, and empowering other women to enter a highly competitive, and male-dominated industry. It's been 4 years since I've joined the UWIN community, when it was only offered to Bentley University and UMASS Boston students; it has since expanded to 13 schools in the Boston area creating an even vaster network of talent. In 2020, UWIN celebrated its fifth anniversary. It is amazing to see how much UWIN has grown, evolved, and changed. However, like the orange and purple logo that first caught my attention, UWIN is still colored by its warm, energetic, and exciting team and opportunities.

Deanna Leung graduated from Bentley University in 2019 with a major in Finance and a minor in Spanish for Business. Following graduation she worked as a private credit analyst in Boston. She is currently serving with AmeriCorps at 826 Boston, a youth writing and publishing non-profit, as a writing tutor at a high school where all the students are immigrants and English language learners. Leveraging her experience in business writing and mentorship, she helps the students with their writing to succeed in school, work, and life."

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